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"For a Man's House Is His Castle" - Making the House Liveable

Alda Wilson
Iowa State College

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Making the House Liveable

By ALDA WILSON, '95

MANY women spend days planning and selecting their apparel and are much gratified when they receive the commendation of their friends. How much more important and lasting are the results from time and study spent upon securing a comfortable and beautiful home.

Let us regard our furnishings as the pigments with which we can make a picture upon the background of ceiling, walls and floors. The background seems the logical first consideration, walls with a floor and ceiling. Let these all be unobtrusive and more or less neutral. The floors darkest, walls medium and ceiling lightest in color. The color chosen depends upon the "exposure" of the rooms, north rooms requiring warm colors, south cold and sunfast, east or west depending more upon personal taste. Have harmony in color; if the doors and woodwork of your rooms are stained your scheme must be darker than when painted woodwork is used. One general principle applies in all cases, avoid shiny surfaces, except in kitchen and bathrooms where they may be accepted as an aid to cleanliness.

The doors are a part of the wall surface and the windows are often landscapes far more beautiful than those we aspire to purchase "some day" to hang upon our walls. Art holds the mirror up to nature so do not shut out your glimpse of ever changing branch tracery against blue skies by using ugly stiff "shades" pulled religiously to the center rail of the double hung windows. Have the shades by all means to use when sunlight is too glaring or when privacy is desired, but use your windows as pictures and your draperies as frames to soften the transition from solid walls to landscape.

Do not have walls or rugs conspicuously gay or they will no longer remain in the background. If walls are plain use rugs with a pattern and the reverse is also advisable.

When the rooms are arranged with large openings between hall, living room and dining room, do not treat each as a separate unit, but consider the whole as a living room and treat the walls in the same manner thruout. If the walls are of sand finished plaster use flat paint. If they are smooth, hard finish, use Japanese grass cloth or wall paper all over or hung in panels. Ceilings should not be white but a light shade of the wall color.

Nothing runs a more varied course than our floor coverings; from the lowly rag carpet of colonial days to the sophisticated oriental. Each has its place, only not side by side. Use the brilliant Navajo in the porch, the velvet, oriental or Anglo-Persian in the living rooms and the braided or woven rag rugs will keep company with the old four-poster in the guest room.

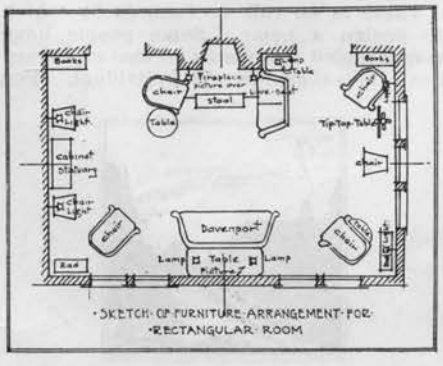
Happy the household which has inherited fine old furniture or even old furniture which is not so fine, as much may be done by renovation. Even the ornate golden oak may have the ornaments and glossy varnish removed and be stained and refinished until it becomees a fit associate for its peers. If you do not have heirlooms, buy some. Do not allow yourself to be persuaded to buy a "set" for each room but look at each piece before purchasing as something which you expect to live with for many years and then hand down to your descendants.

Fortunately we have emerged from the era of golden oak, composition ornament, flowered carpets and what nots, into a day when the manufacturers have felt the demand for the well made reproduction of fine old furniture. Everyone may decide as to the relative merits, and the fitness for its place in his house, of Shearton, Jasobean, Queen Anne or Italian and feel moderately certain of finding the furniture required in the chosen style. Not all in the same shop perhaps, but patience, perserverance and a bank account will accomplish all things. Good furniture is always good, age only mellows and adds charm.

Have a furniture fund in your family or buy it for anniversary presents each year—something of real worth; a nest of tables, a winged chair, a tapestry or picture. Study your house and your friend's houses and learn by their experience. Study and change until the effect desired is reached and you have the "harmonious whole." The so much discussed Whistler once said, "a finished thing is to use a dead thing. There is no longer any urge to interest myself."

The livableness of a room depends largely upon the manner in which the furniture is placed and the relation of the pieces to each other and to the needs of the family. In arranging your rooms it is a good plan to have bits o cardboard cut out the size of each piece, made to the same scale as the floor plans of your house. By moving these about you can study grouping without the drudgery of lifting the heavy furniture. Otherwise decide upon the most desirable location for the larger pieces, such as piano or davenport. Then study an effective grouping for each corner of the room, for example a bookcase, table, lamp, two chairs and a large picture, this done you will be surprised to find that you have a finished product.

Do not feel timid about placing a real work of art in your home. We are prone to think of art as safely housed in art galleries and museums but more and more people are buying one or more things of real art value with which to decorate their homes, and having secured the "keynote", the whole scheme of the decoration of a house becomes inspired thereby. Not many of us have the interiors to accomodate the larger pieces of sculpture and canvasses but the less pretentious in size, in both sculpture and painting are none the less inspired and will find their places in a house of modest pretentions. A room with large wall spaces may have fabrics used to good advantage, an east Indian print or a silk rug hung back of a davenport, a piece of Chinese embroidery, some old brocade used as a background for a statuette or a Spanish or Paisley shawl, hung in a hall will work wonders. In hanging fabrics do not try to keep them straight and stiff; a natural ripple or fold gives shadows and charm.



SKETCH OF FURNITURE ARRANGEMENT FOR RECTANGULAR ROOM

Hangings at door and window openings give a finish to the room which nothing else can impart. In choosing overdrapes and portiers remember that the right color is more important than price. The present tendency is for simplicity everywhere and no white except perhaps in bedrooms and in table linen. The sunfast fabrics cost more but wear longer. Heavy basket woven canvas and art denims may replace the more expensive velours and damasks in some interiors with colored gauze in silk, linen or cotton or some form of "casement cloth" hung at the windows either with or without a valance and side drapes. Remember a house is like an income; the smaller it is the more carefully it must be studied.

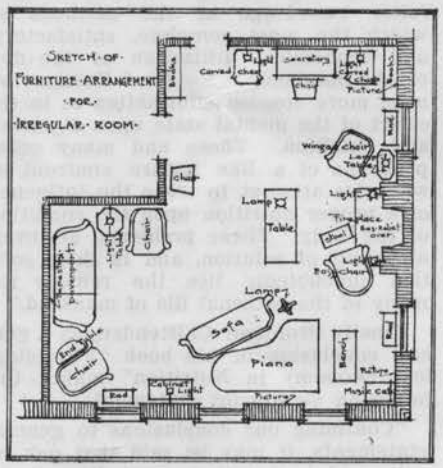
Use a striped awning to shut out the too brilliant sunshine of a west or south exposure without shade, and you will be delighted with the cooled and shaded interior. The same striped awning cloth makes excellent curtains for porches, sun rooms and sleeping porches when hung with rings and pulleys so as to allow them to be closed and opened at will. Brilliantine, homespun, pongee or Austrian cloth may be used instead of the heavier material and these are also excellent in bedrooms either plain or scalloped, bound or hemmed. Use painted or wicker furniture in porches, sun rooms, and breakfast rooms. The wicker may be stained any color desired and rubbed with paint of a contrasting color to give a two-toned effect.

Details make or mar a room, even tho the fundamentals have been chosen with good judgment. Too many decorative accessories are as fatal as too few. A good test is to have nothing in your rooms which you do not know to be useful or believe to be beautiful. Avoid unframed photographs standing upon mantel or piano. Such personal belongings should not be found in the rooms for general use. Have some good flower holders, some of which may be filled in winter with boquets of straw

flowers or leaves and berries. Good vases of pottery and lustre or brass or copper bowls have a decorative value when placed on table mantle or bookcase, with or without flowers, and a colorful glass bowl with flanking candle sticks of glass, wood, or brass, holding brilliant candles would turn many a dull spot into a place of beauty.

Do not be afraid of color when used in small amounts; as accents it cannot be too brilliant. Whatever your color scheme may be follow it consistantly with an eye to contrast as well as to harmony. Rooms are often far too neutral in tone. Lamps placed where light is needed add so much to comfort and happiness of effect that we wonder why we have tolerated the fixture with unshaded lights hanging from the center of the room so long. Have numerous base receptacles and floor outlets in your rooms, put one wherever you think a light might be needed; they may all be attached to the switch at the entrance door if thought desirable or turned on separately as needed. Lovely lamps may be made from pottery or metal jars from candlesticks fitted with electric bulbs instead of candles or they may be found in infinite variety in the shops. Sidelights which look like old colonial lamps or double brackets, with or without candles, of wrought iron, silver or brass, come in very good designs.

Use overhead lights in dining rooms, narrow halls, kitchen, pantry and entrance halls for convenience. In bed rooms have a light dropped just in front of the bureau and the dressing table finished with shades of silk to match the draperies, one of these should be connected to the switch at the entrance door. These two lights with a base receptacle for a reading lamp at bed-side would be sufficient for most bedrooms. A bracket light with long chain on pull socket, placed over the head of the bed, on sleeping porch or in bed rooms, solves the reading light problem where wall space is limited. Japanese lanterns of varnished cloth make very good fixtures for certain rooms. Mirrors carefully placed have a decorative value and will increase the light when hung in rooms with north windows or with windows under a porch. The beautiful old colonial and Italian mirrors are ideal for hanging over fireplaces, or in small rooms they seem to add space.



The ideal house is the small one with large rooms. If your house has small rooms have a partition removed so as to have at least one room of good size. A room irregular in shape will often furnish more interestingly than a rectangular one of the same area.

Remember, when furnishing, that Rome is not the only worth-while thing which has needed many days for building. And above all never feel discouraged on account of small means. Ingenuity will make a much more livable house than money spent without thought.

The Economics of Consumption

By JOHN E. BRINDLEY, Professor and Head of Economic Science

IN THE brief space and time at his disposal, the writer can do little more than state a few of the most important problems connected with a subject of such magnitude and complexity as the **Economics of Consumption.** In its relation to fundamental economic theories of production, distribution, and exchange; in its vital connection with almost numberless special economic and social problems such as wages and working conditions, standards of living and family budgets, poverty, unemployment and crime, immigration and tariff legislation, the tax system, etc., and finally in its dependence upon numerous technical studies of food, clothing and other utilities that minister directly to the wants of man—consumption is at once the tangible bond and motive force of the present economic order. Man, as a consumer of economic goods and services—and we all must be consumers—is the end and aim of all the economic activity involved in the production, distribution and exchange of wealth. On the ancient theory, however, that what touches Caesar first shall be last served, consumption has received scant attention aside from its general recognition as one of the classical divisions of economic science. With the rapid growth of colleges of home economics for the scientific study of the highly technical aspects of the problem, a more complete development of the **Economics of Consumption** is certain to follow.

First of all the reader should have a clear idea of the meaning of consumption of one of the principal divisions of economic science. Consumption is the use of economic goods or services in the direct satisfaction of human wants. So-called productive consumption is therefore not consumption at all but depreciation, which is an important technical aspect of the subject of production itself. To the retailer, food, clothing and the winter's supply of coal are production goods, not consumption goods. As a creator of place and time utilities, the retailer is a producer, performing as he does the last step in the frequently long process of production. To the consumer, food, clothing, and the winter's supply of coal are consumption goods, and should be so treated in a study of consumption as contrasted with production. Consumption is therefore a point of view—the point of view of the consumer in the direct satisfaction of his wants.

A second fact, which should be stated in this connection is the value of consumption goods in the United States and the relative increase per capita of this class of goods. King, in his very scholarly work on "Wealth and Income of The People of The United States" estimates that the total value of consumption goods increased from $2,317,000,000 in 1850 to $32,976,000,000 in 1910, a per capita increase during the same period from $72.00 to $284.00. While the figures are not given, it may reasonably be assumed that, measured in dollars at least, the total and per capita increase since 1910 has been very great. Two points stand out in these data as especially significant: first, the vast magnitude of the problem of consumption, quantitatively expressed; and the fact that, contrary to the economic pessimism of Marthus, the supply of consumption goods has increased much more rapidly than the population. When we take into consideration the fact that production goods have increased far more rapidly still, we can form some idea of the rapid progress of economic society from the point of view both of living conditions and capital goods—the result of the industrial revolution based upon the unparalleled advancement of pure and applied science.

In the third place, standards of living, family budgets and closely allied problems should be studied in a more thoro and scientific manner than has been done in the past. Such works as Comish, "The Standard of Living," some parts of Nystrom, "The Economies of Retailing," and Bulletin Number 7 of the Bureau of Applied Economics entitled "Standards of Living" represent good beginnings along this line. A so-called family budget, however, has real meaning only to the extent that it is based upon and properly related to highly technical studies in the special field of home economics. We refer of course to comprehensive and scientific investigations of such practical problems as food, clothing, and housing conditions. From an economic, social and educational standpoint, no problems can be more important than a real practical knowledge of those living conditions, which, in the last analysis, determine our efficiency, health, and happiness.

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